



NMCPHC QUICK HITS

Workplace Safety? Say Eye!

Exposure to eye health hazards can happen anywhere, especially in the workplace, where you can be exposed to fire, intense light and debris. Damage to your eyes and vision can have a severe impact on mission readiness, as well as effects on life outside of work.

Types of Eye Injuries

The most common types of [eye injuries](#) are small particles, such as wood, dust or metal, scraping the eye. These could be small scratches that cause mild discomfort, or major cuts to the tissue that could require a visit to an emergency room. For all eye injuries, it is important to not rub or touch the eye which might cause more irritation.

Preventing Injuries in the Workplace

Personal protective eyewear should always be worn in areas where eye injuries could occur, even if you're just passing through the area. To prevent eye injuries from occurring:

- Identify and assess situations and areas that pose a potential threat to eye health.
- Get regular eye exams and consider getting prescription glasses or goggles if needed.
- Wear only approved safety eyewear, and those suggested for the specific situation, such as glasses with side protection if working in an area with flying particles. If you are working near hazardous ultraviolet light sources (welding or lasers), special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shields or helmets should be worn.
- Eyewear should be fit to the individual to provide appropriate, comfortable coverage.
- Identify the nearest eyewash and first-aid station in your workplace in the event that an accident occurs and train workers to respond to hazardous incidents.

You should be mindful of [eye health and safety while off duty](#) as well as on. In addition to the things you should do at work to protect your vision, it is recommended that you use sunglasses with UV protection for prolonged sun exposure, even in the early morning or late evening, and avoid sleeping in contact lenses, even if they are approved for extended wear.



(U.S. Navy photo by Seaman Apprentice Connor Houghtaling)



(U.S. Navy photo by Lance Cpl. Anna Albrecht)

Did You Know?

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports that every day more than 2,000 people get work-related eye injuries that require medical treatment. Safety experts and eye doctors believe that the proper eye protection could have lessened the severity of 90% of these eye injuries.

Additional Resources

- Want to learn more about how eye injuries happen to workers? [Click here!](#)
- [Click here](#) for more information on workplace eye health and safety from Preventing Blindness, a volunteer organization dedicated to reducing eye injuries and preserving vision.

